

government and DOP's director, Mario Muñoz E., who saw it as a solution to one of the oldest island problems. According to Muñoz, there was little chance of success because of the costs involved (a minimum estimated at around \$50 million) as well as opposition by the islanders. It is said that the project almost got off the ground in 1984 but an earthquake in Chile a year later absorbed all assigned funds and, until now, the project had not been reconsidered because of the costs involved.

ACCORDING TO THE *TE RAPA NUI* WEB SITE, the King El Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Wathiqu Billah Shah and Queen Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Nur Zahirah of Malaysia visited Easter Island between April 18 and 23, 2009. The royal couple stayed for six hours. Two days later actor John Travolta landed his 707 at Mataverí for a brief re-fueling before he continued en route to Buenos Aires.

A PERSONAL REPORT FROM THE ISLAND reveals that there are now approximately 4 cars for every person on the island! If true, and based on the most recent population estimates, that means over 19,000 cars!

WHAT'S NEW IN THE PACIFIC

STATEHOOD CELEBRATION/PROTEST

In Honolulu, Hawai'i's Statehood Day was a mix of celebration and protest, as a group of about a thousand demonstrators were expected to rally outside the Hawai'i Convention Center. Said Lynette Cruz, organizer of the Hawaiian Independence Action Alliance, "We want to show how U.S. imperialism has spread across the Pacific and across the world. It'll be fun". [Fun?] Previous statehood anniversaries haven't always been peaceful. In 2006 American-flag-waving Statehood Day celebrants and Hawaiian sovereignty advocates clashed at Iolani Palace, the heart of the Hawaiian monarchy as the conflict turned into a shouting match. Last year police arrested 23 members of a Hawaiian pro-sovereignty group who broke into the palace, locked its gates, and posted signs that read, "Property of the Kingdom of Hawaiian Trust".

Source: *Yahoo! News* (August 21, 2009)

MASSIVE QUAKE MOVES NEW ZEALAND TOWARDS AUSTRALIA

"The first thing we're gonna have to do is buy all new globes". — *King Ralph*

A massive 7.8-magnitude earthquake last week (the largest in nearly 80 years) moved the south of New Zealand some 30 cm (12") closer to Australia. A small tsunami triggered by the earthquake registered on tidal gauges as only 1 m (39"), though there were some land slips and slight damage to some buildings when it struck.

Source: *Breitbart.com* (July 22, 2009)

WORLD'S LARGEST TELESCOPE TO BE BUILT IN HAWAII

Hawai'i is slated to have the largest telescope in the world, with a mirror 100 ft. (30 m) in diameter. It will be so

large it should be able to gather light that will have spent 13 billion years traveling to Earth. This means astronomers looking into this telescope will be able to see images of the first stars and galaxies forming a mere 400 million years after the Big Bang. The telescope, expected to be completed by 2018, will be located atop a dormant volcano of Mauna Kea on the Big Island (at an altitude of 13,796 ft. [4.18 km]), and should afford 300 viewing days a year.

Source: *Yahoo! News* (July 21, 2009)

TUVALU VOWS TO STOP USING FOSSIL FUELS

Under threat from rising seas caused by global warming, the island nation of Tuvalu announced that it is going to be doing its part for climate change by fueling its economy entirely from renewable sources by 2020. With a population of approximately 12,000 persons, Tuvalu joins a movement of countries and cities committed to going climate-neutral.

Tuvalu hopes to replace the fossil fuels it imports by cargo ship with solar energy and wind power, a project expected to cost \$20 million. So far, it has installed a 40-kilowatt solar-energy system.

Source: *Arizona Republic* (July 20, 2009)

MIGRATION LINKED TO TOXIN

Researchers at the Florida Institute of Technology, using archaeological evidence, prehistoric climate data, and recent reports of ciguatera poisoning (a foodborne illness caused by eating reef species whose flesh is contaminated with a toxin), theorize that climate conditions conducive to ciguatera outbreaks may have occurred in French Polynesia between 1000 CE and 1450 CE — an active period of Polynesian voyaging and colonization — and, rather than wanderlust, these factors may have inspired early Polynesians wayfarers to undertake risky voyages across the Pacific to Hawai'i, New Zealand, and Easter Island.

Source: *Honolulu Advertiser* (July 15, 2009)

EL NIÑO ARRIVES IN THE PACIFIC

Scientists in the U.S. have announced the arrival of El Niño — the cyclical rise in sea-surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean, influencing fisheries and global weather patterns, which occurs every two to five years, lasts about a year, and is associated with a weakening in the easterly trade wind. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Washington DC, the current El Niño is expected to continue developing over the next several months and to last through the Winter. Previous El Niños have seen more rainfall over the central tropical Pacific, drought in Indonesia, and powerful Winter storms in California as well as flooding and mudslides in Central and South America. The phenomenon has also been linked to reduced hurricane activity in the Atlantic and additional Winter precipitation in the arid southwestern United States.

Source: *Nature* 450 (7253):317 (2009)

HEPATITIS B AMONG NATIVE HAWAIIANS AND OTHERS

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, in concert with the National Task Force on Hepatitis B, have created a strategic plan to address the disproportionate impact of chronic Hepatitis B (HBV) in the minority communities of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific islanders. It is estimated that 1.4 million persons in the U.S. live with chronic Hepatitis B, more than half of whom belong to these minority communities, as these populations have the highest rate of chronic HBV among all racial or ethnic groups in the U.S. Not too surprisingly, these minorities also share a disproportionately high risk for liver cancer. The HBV infection-related mortality rate among these minorities is 7 times greater than the rate among Whites. The strategic plan outlines health education, screenings, care, and research needed to reduce and eventually eliminate chronic HBV among Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific islanders. Additional information is available via the URL below.

<<http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/brown.aspx?lvl=2&lvlid=90>>

Source: *Journal of the American Medical Association* 301(24):2545 (2009)

IN KEEPING WITH THE U.S. MINT'S release of state quarters, four new designs have been issued in 2009 to represent U.S. holdings in the Pacific — American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands...



WHAT'S NEW ELSEWHERE

TOURISM IMPACT PROGRAM

At the end of May a new program designed to reduce the negative impact of tourism on Easter Island was launched. Financed by the Japanese government in collaboration with Chile and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), the program will promote training and involvement of local communities on the island in sus-

tainable eco-tourism. Said UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura, the project will try to find a "balance between the needs for the preservation of the sites and the development of the island community". Chilean President Michelle Bachelet praised the program, remarking that it should give the "local community a leading role in the enhancement and promotion" of its heritage.

Source: *UPI.com* (May 29, 2009)

"SILENT WRITINGS"

Espace Louis Vuitton, in association with The Moai Project, hosted an exhibition between March and August of this year in Paris. The focal point of "Silent Writings" was the presentation of three original *rongorongo* tablets from Easter Island previously held (and apparently never previously released) by the Vatican Museum.

Together with the Easter Island artefacts, the exhibition brought together the works of contemporary artists to provide a series of different perspectives in areas identified by "impression", "trace", "symbol", and "writing".

For more information, check out the exhibition Web site: <www.louisvuitton.com/espaceculturel>

SOUNDING THE PACIFIC: MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF OCEANIA

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
November 17, 2009-September 6, 2010

Music is a universal human phenomenon. Musical instruments and musical expression, however, take an almost infinite variety of forms throughout the world. This is especially true in Oceania (the Pacific Islands) whose more than 1,800 different peoples create an astonishing diversity of musical instruments, from familiar types such as drums, flutes, and the Hawaiian ukulele, to unusual forms such as slit gongs carved in the form of ancestral catfish, bullroarers whose eerie whirring sounds are said to be the voices of supernatural beings, and delicate stringed instruments with sounding chambers fashioned from palm leaves. From the tropical rainforests of Island Southeast Asia, to the deserts of Australia, to remote coral atolls, musical instruments in Oceania play central roles in activities ranging from religious rituals and initiations, to feasts, celebrations, courting, and secular entertainment. This exhibition — the first in an art museum to be devoted exclusively to Oceanic musical instruments — explores the rich diversity of musical instruments created and used in the Pacific Islands. Drawn primarily from the Metropolitan's collections, the exhibition features more than 60 instruments from small personal types such as panpipes and courting whistles to larger forms played at performances heard by the entire community, such as the exquisitely carved temple drums of the Austral Islands or the imposing sacred slit gongs of New Guinea.

FRATERNAL ORDER OF THE MOAI

In our last issue, we noted that the Fraternal Order Moai (FOM) has made the EIF a beneficiary. The picture below shows a rather large check that was sent to us by FOM and we